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DEATH A GAIN TO THE CHRISTIAN :
A SERMON



COLTON

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DEATH A GAIN TO THE CHRISTIAN.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT MONSON, DECEMBER 31, 1823.

AT THE INTERMENT OF

MRS. LUCINDA ELY,

THE WIFE OF

REV. ALFRED ELY.

BY SIMEON COLTON,
PRINCIPAL IN MONSON ACADEMY.

Published by desire of mourning friends.

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1824.

SERMON.

PHILIPPIANS, i. 21.

FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN.

THREE have been few more devoted servants of the Lord Jesus Christ than the Apostle Paul. Nor have we many examples, that more clearly illustrate the temper and constancy of the christian character, than those which the history of this extraordinary man affords. The passage I have selected for a text, will lead us to consider what were his feelings in a time of affliction, and what were his views of death in relation to the pious. It is a part of an epistle which he wrote while a prisoner at Rome—written in answer to a message which he had received from the Philippian church, sent for the purpose of expressing their sympathy, and extending relief to his necessities. Through him who acted as the messenger of the church in delivering this epistle, the apostle learned that the disciples at Philippi had experienced much anxiety on his account. In answering their epistle, therefore, after having commended their constancy, he proceeded to speak of his own condition ; and in describing this, he gave them to understand that though a prisoner, he had many reasons for rejoicing. Through his bonds, he had been furnished with an opportunity of preaching Christ in that place. Many had listened to his discourses, and some, he had reason to suppose, had been converted. Thus his trials had been overruled for good, and his imprisonment had been made the means of promoting the great purposes of the ministry. He was determined, therefore, to endure his

sufferings with patience, that Christ might be honored; for to honor Christ was his greatest concern, and to enjoy him, the sum of all his desires.

“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” The amount of this expression is that though his trials were great, yet he was not destitute of comfort, nor would he complain. The sentiment which the text contains is obviously this; that it is the aim of the christian to glorify and enjoy God while he lives, and as furnishing him with a better opportunity for this, it is gain to him to die.

In further prosecuting this subject, I shall follow the order suggested in the text, and consider

I. What is implied in the phrase, “For me to live is Christ.”

II. Enquire how death is the believer’s gain.

In the first place, we will attend to the phrase, “For me to live is Christ.” This expression suggests two particulars for consideration. First, it is the desire of the christian while he lives to glorify God. This was eminently true of the apostle Paul. Subsequent to his conversion, the advancement of the Redeemer’s kingdom occupied his undivided attention. As violent as he had been in persecuting while an enemy, so zealous he was in defending when he became a friend. Of the truth of this remark, every candid person will be convinced, who attentively reads the history of his life. In whatever he did, even to eating and drinking, the glory of God was the end in view. But this trait in the apostle’s character is a trait not peculiar to him. That the aim and desire of every real christian is to glorify and enjoy God, needs not a labored argument for proof. Evidence may be gathered from his life, his actions, his exertions in endeavoring to bring others to a knowledge of the truth. The language of the real christian is, “Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire beside thee.” It is the wish and the endeavor of the christian in all things to imitate his Master. Whether laboring as a minister, a missionary, or endeavoring to excite others to acts of benevolence,

the aim is to honor God. Nor let it be thought that this trait of character is to be found only in those who occupy a public station. There are many devoted servants of the Lord, whose virtues are unnoticed amid the glare of worldly grandeur. Would you learn their excellence you must follow them to the walks of private life ; visit them in a season of affliction ; observe their deportment in the domestic circle ; go with them to the family altar, to the closet ; mark their fidelity to their household, and their attention to the wants of the needy among their fellow men. You must note their integrity, their scrupulous regard to the rule of right, and their fear lest in any way God should be dishonored through their means. Many such devoted servants of the Lord there are. They may now live unnoticed in the world, but hereafter they will shine as brilliant stars in the kingdom of heaven.

The second suggestion which the former clause of our text presents for consideration, is that christians in every condition of life find enjoyment in religion. Men unacquainted with the nature of religion, are often heard to speak of it as having a tendency to diminish the amount of enjoyment. They acknowledge it is important, because it is required ; but yet have no just conceptions of its real character. Under the influence of this prejudice, they regard religious men as restrained in a sort of honorable confinement : forbidden by the character they bear to partake in the ordinary pleasures of life. But how little do people of this description understand the nature of the subject on which they venture so freely to decide ? For whether we judge of the character of religion from the sacred page, or from the effect it actually produces in life, no opinion will be found more distant from the truth. “ Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come.” Religion, aside from what it secures beyond the grave, is valuable as the means of augmenting present enjoyment. “ Peace,” says our Saviour, “ I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” “ The

kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." "Wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Equally clear is it from a consideration of the nature of religion, that its tendency is to increase the amount of enjoyment; for what more than this assists in controlling our unholy passions, in alleviating our sorrows, in soothing a troubled mind, and in bearing with calmness the burdens of life?

We are not, however, confined to such arguments alone for proof. A slight examination of facts will lead to the same result. Where are any to be found, who know so well what enjoyment is, as zealous and devoted christians? And how often has it happened that the change wrought by grace has been the means of producing a change from a state of wretchedness, either external or internal, to a state of high enjoyment? A person of eminent piety, speaking on this subject, has left this testimony respecting himself: "When I lived in the world, I thought I knew what pleasure was; but since I obtained a hope, I find I knew nothing about comfort, or joy." "There is more comfort," adds another, "to be taken in religion in one hour, than I ever took in all my life before." Christians, it is true, are not all able to speak in such exalted terms of their spiritual state. Many have seasons of great depression, and there are some who seem to be always in a sort of "bondage through fear of death." But taking life as a whole, who are there that have so much real enjoyment as christians, notwithstanding their occasional doubts and fears? There may indeed be seasons when they are in great despondency. A dark, and in their apprehension a portentous cloud, may shut from them the last glimmer of light; but if the sun is hid, it has not set. Through his collected influence the cloud will disperse, and again we shall behold the splendor of a delightful day.

Worldly people, governed by a perverse taste, may consider religion as a burden; but a christian, whose taste accords

with the duties required, finds no enjoyment equal to that of serving God. His mind is tranquil, because the plan of the divine government is such as he cordially approves. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused." Whether he meditate on the works of creation, or take a view of the dealings of Providence, he finds much to comfort him, and awaken the gratitude of his soul. That God governs the world is a matter of pleasure ; and that he governs it as he does, is a ground of peculiar satisfaction. But in the plan of redemption, taken in all its parts, the christian finds a subject on which he cannot but dwell with delight. Every part of this stupendous work affords him satisfaction in the contemplation. Considering himself as a captive redeemed from sin, he reflects with astonishment on what has been done. A prisoner set at liberty ; a criminal rescued from merited punishment ; and by whom has it been done ? Who paid the ransom ; who opened the prison doors ; who stayed the execution of justice ? It was Christ, my Saviour, my Lord and my God ! What exquisite pleasure must the christian experience while such a train of thought is passing through his mind ? Let it not be said this is an imaginary picture—a character without existence. To form an accurate opinion of the christian, you must know the state of his heart,—you must listen to his aspirations when communing with his Maker in secret, undisturbed by the cares of the world, and aloof from those who would entice him to sin. It is not in the bustle of a crowd that you can best learn the christian's character, or the measure of his comfort. Fruit of such excellence grows not in a soil so barren. There is excellence in the christian, which is too pure to be mingled with the rubbish of the world. He has sources of comfort, also, with which the world is utterly unacquainted. He possesses the peculiar art of extracting pleasure from pain, and of deriving comfort even from his trials. In every act of chastisement, he beholds a display of mercy ; and consequently an occasion for thankfulness. Every child of grace can say, " For me to

live is Christ." To glorify God is his earnest desire ; and under the influence of this desire, there is no state in which he does not find comfort in religion.

But though it is thus the aim of the christian to glorify God, and enjoy him in life, yet as rendering this opportunity for glorifying and enjoying him more complete, it is gain to him to die. This brings me to the

Second part of my subject, " To die is gain." This part of the text suggests this important enquiry : Why is death a gain to the christian ? The answer to this enquiry may properly be considered under several particulars.

Death is a gain to the christian, in the first place, because it releases him from the trials, and sorrows of his pilgrimage state. Man in the present world, is in a state of probation. He has been endowed with rational faculties—he is made accountable, and is destined to immortality. All the circumstances of his existence are so ordered as to develope his character, and prepare him for the process of the judgment day. It is for this reason that he is made subject to infirmities and pains. It is for this reason that events are continually occurring, which are designed to exert a powerful influence on his feelings and conduct. The pain thus produced, is in many instances severe, and sometimes so severe, that life itself becomes a burden. Nor are trials found among those only, who are strangers to God. They form a part of the lot of the christian in common with others. But the christian, though conscious that submission is a duty, finds it difficult always to control himself. How much gratification, then, in the hour of distress, must he derive from the reflection, that the time is soon coming, when he shall no longer need correction, and when he shall be released from sin, and from pain. This will happen at death. An end will then be put to all suffering. From that time, " God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

Who then will doubt, that, as the christian is to gain such a release from trouble, 'death is to him a gain ; and especially, as this state of suffering, is to be succeeded by an unchangeable state of felicity ? What exquisite pleasure does the thought afford, that after being tossed upon this tempestuous sea of life, there is a haven of rest, where trouble shall be unknown, and where there shall be nothing to disturb our enjoyment ? But if in anticipation there is so much pleasure, what, think you, must be the felicity of those who have crossed this sea, and, standing upon the opposite shore, can look back on the trials through which they have passed, and the dangers they have escaped ? And how much will their enjoyment be increased in that new state of existence, by the remembrance of the conflicts, the pains, and the trials they have endured ; from all of which, they have by death gained a release ?

Death is a gain to the christian, in the second place, because it releases him from the remaining corruptions of nature, which in his pilgrimage state, occasion him much distress. Believers, it should be remembered, are sanctified but in part, while in a state of probation. At death, all remaining unholiness is taken from them ; and when again at the resurrection, the soul and the body are united, "Corruption puts on incorruption, and death is swallowed up in victory." But while the believer tabernacles in the flesh, he is called to pass through many severe conflicts, arising from the remains of depravity in the heart. Frequently, through the power of these internal enemies, he is thrown into the greatest distress ; his hope forsakes him, he stands in his own estimation, a wretch undone, a sinner too great to be forgiven ; he abhors himself, and in the bitterness of his soul, exclaims "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" When, he earnestly enquires, shall I be set free from this wicked heart ? When shall I be cleansed from these vile affections ? When shall I be permitted to serve God undisturbed by these enemies of my soul ? Death terminates the struggle. Then what grace has begun, grace completes.

Every enemy is slain, and the believer stands complete in the moral likeness of God. Clad in the robe of victory, he admires that goodness which has thus wrought out salvation for his soul. What a glorious change ! And what, O christian, can be more animating, than the prospect of deliverance from your spiritual enemies—those enemies that in your present state, are constantly harrassing your soul and disturbing your peace ? Such a deliverance, death acomplishes, and thus it is the believer's gain.

Death is a gain to the christian, in the third place, as it ushers him into a state of endless felicity. That the soul of the good man, at death, enters immediately into a state of rest, need not be argued in this place. It will not, probably, be questioned by an individual here present, whether the day of quitting the world is not the day of entering the Paradise above. To him, therefore, who has an interest in Christ, death is the cause of unspeakable gain. In that event, he changes a world of sin, temptation, and trial, for a state of eternal joy. His work is then done, his labors are ended, and he enters to receive the reward, which the Lord, the righteous judge, hath prepared for them that love him. From that time, he stands complete in holiness and happiness—happy in the society of the redeemed, and happy in the enjoyment of God. How vast the difference in the state of the believer, before and after his death ! In his pilgrimage state, he is troubled by “ fightings without and fears within.” Waves of sorrow often overwhelm his soul, so that in the judgment of worldly men, he is considered of all others the most miserable. But death entirely changes the scene. The believer's felicity then becomes complete. Every circumstance exactly accords with his wishes. The employment in which he is engaged, the society with which he is united, are such, as in every respect agree with his inclination. He has entered upon a state of rest ; a rest from sin ; a rest from the trials of an unholy heart ; a rest that accords with every desire of his soul.

Having thus considered a few of the suggestions of the text, we will now pass on to some general remarks that flow from the subject.

1. The subject leads us to consider the value of religion, as the means of promoting our comfort in the present life. Were there no existence beyond the grave ; were the benefit of religion confined entirely to the state in which we now live, its value ought, notwithstanding, to secure to it a proper respect. As furnishing the best directory for controlling our passions, regulating our temper, exciting in us benevolent affections, and as affording us the best rules of life, it is of the highest importance. It is religion only, which can give efficiency to the obligations of men, which can secure us friends, and enstamp a value on the enjoyments of life. By this, the rugged path of life is smoothed, death is disarmed of its terrors, and even the grave is made desirable. Did our enjoyments terminate with this life, there are no means by which we could add so much to the stock, as by a due attention to religion. A religious man is of all others, furnished with the most effectual means of securing happiness. As far as religion prevails, happiness is secured. Were all religious, all would be happy. Their duty would coincide with their wishes, and every circumstance of their existence, would conspire to promote their felicity.

2. The subject leads us to consider what ought to be the feelings of the christian, in reference to his continuing to live in the world. As it is essential to the christian character, that there be a willingness to quit the world whenever God shall call, so it is equally essential, that there be a willingness to remain so long as it is the divine pleasure to direct. This part of the christian's duty and character, was well understood by the apostle, whose words I have used as a text ; and the feelings he manifested in relation to the duty, indicate a perfect acquiescence in the will of God. Though he considered it better to go hence, and be with Christ, yet he expressed no desire that his appointed time should be hastened, but

esteemed it a pleasure to perform his duty in his station till his Master should see fit to release him. Such are the feelings of every real christian, as far as grace prevails in the heart. Nor would he be excusable, were any thing short of this found in his life. Were the christian doomed to perpetual misery in this life, as the condition of his future felicity, there might be a plausible reason for wishing the time to be short. But, though attended with trials, he is not of necessity miserable. On the contrary, he is furnished with an antidote capable of converting all his trials into so many means of benefit. He has, therefore, no good reason why he should wish his time of probation shortened. And no real christian, will, for a moment, suffer himself to complain that God requires him to live so long in the world. On the other hand, he will deem it as much a duty, to be willing to live till his appointed time shall come, as to go when that has arrived. And while he lives, he will endeavor to employ his time, so that God may be glorified, and his own enjoyment secured. Though it be his lot, in accomplishing this endeavor, to pass through a furnace of affliction, he will not regret that he exists, nor ask to be released till the appointed hour has come.

3. Though the christian is satisfied to live through his appointed time, yet the thought of the approach of death will rather afford him pleasure than pain. The apostle Paul has furnished us an example of the feelings I have here ascribed to the christian character: “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.” The same feelings exist in every christian to a greater or less extent, as divine grace prevails. To be willing to live should be considered not only a duty, but a pleasure ; and yet as furnishing a better opportunity to glorify God, the christian will consider it gain to die. He regards death not merely as the termination of a desirable state of existence, but as the means of introducing him into a state still more desirable ;—a state of perfect felicity. Viewed in this light, death loses its terror : the hour of dissolution is anticipated with

composure of feeling, and the approaching messenger is greeted with a welcome. Not unfrequently have christians had such animating views of their state, that they have been able in the expiring moment triumphantly to exclaim, " O death, where is thy sting ! O grave, where is thy victory !"

4. The subject we have been considering, is calculated to afford much consolation to the surviving friends of such as die in the Lord. Though it is painful to bid adieu to an affectionate friend ; though a deep and durable wound is inflicted on the survivor ; yet the thought that this same friend has by means of death been released from the cares, the pains, and sorrows of this world, cannot fail to afford consolation, amid the lonely hours which the righteous dispensation of Providence has produced. While we mourn under the loss ; while nature refuses to be silent ; this same friend, whose absence we deplore, disengaged from every burden, is uniting with the redeemed in heaven in a song of everlasting praise. How precious, how consoling the thought ! And who can be so indifferent to the welfare of his departed friend as not to derive comfort from the consideration of the happy exchange that has been made ? While we entertain a hope that our friends are sharing in the felicity of heavenly beings, it would certainly be a most unreasonable desire that they should again return to this world of temptation and trial. And if this hope is strengthened by the testimony of a godly life, how much must the pain of separation be mitigated by the reflection that while we have sustained a loss, this loss has been the cause of so much gain to them. We indeed mourn, but they rejoice ; we grieve, but they are beyond the reach of pain. " Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." God has chosen them as his friends ; they are to be his companions—to live and reign with him. Death is but the messenger he employs to release them from the world, and introduce them to himself. Their work done, it is time for them to be released ; and their removal is but to introduce them into a state where they may receive the reward,

which the Lord, the righteous Judge, has reserved for all who have faithfully kept his commandments.

Having thus attended to some suggestions arising from our text, you will naturally expect that I make a more immediate application of the subject to the present occasion. We have been summoned together in this place, to pay the last sad office of friendship to the remains of a fellow mortal ;—an event which demands our solemn attention. God has come nigh to us ; he has touched us in a tender part, but we may not complain, for he has an undoubted right to do as he pleases. That we have sustained a loss, will not be questioned ; but we trust that what has occasioned a loss to us, has brought gain to our departed friend.

In offering you a sketch of the life of her whose loss we deplore, I am restrained from saying much by a regard to the wishes of the deceased, who, in her last moments, made this particular request, that little should be said concerning her. A due regard, however, for the living, seems to demand that a suitable tribute of respect be paid to her memory ; nor, as I trust, will this be considered inconsistent with the spirit of her request.

Mrs. LUCINDA ELY, whose remains we are this day to commit to the grave, was the daughter of Hon. Timothy Newell, late of Sturbridge. She was born February 6th, 1781. The period of her childhood, her course of education, and her character in private life, I shall, in conformity with her desire, pass in silence. It is with her character as a christian, that we are more particularly concerned. And in examining this, it is a matter of gratification that there is so much which can be approved, and is worthy of imitation. Connected with such things as are common in most christians, there were not wanting traits of character more peculiar to herself. Possessing considerable vigor of mind, she was accustomed to examine with care the subjects that were presented to her for enquiry ; and she rarely gave her assent to any point, before she had thoroughly considered the

evidence adduced in its support. This habit was as common in religious, as on other subjects. Her opinions on religious subjects were of course not merely those of education, or of trust, but were the result of a conviction, produced by a careful examination. Her attention was particularly arrested to the subject of religion about the year 1809. Her impressions at that important crisis were not those of a sinner suddenly confounded by the dazzling glare of the light of divine truth ; nor those that overwhelm, and then leave the soul in despair ; but they were such as are wrought in a mind prepared by divine grace to receive gradually things as successively presented to the view. Conviction on one subject begat attention on another, till finally the darkness of nature gave place to the light of divine truth. Her mind, as is common in such cases, was much occupied with the doctrines of the Bible. These, she examined with much care ; and the result was a firm conviction of the truth of that system, which comprises what have been more peculiarly denominated the doctrines of grace. In this system she was fixed, believing it to be peculiarly calculated to impress upon men a sense of their dependence, and to exalt the character of God. In accordance with these doctrines, she founded her hope of salvation entirely on the mercy of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ. Having become established in her mind respecting the doctrines of the Bible, and having obtained a hope that she had become experimentally acquainted with the truth, she made a public profession of religion, and was united with the Congregational church in Sturbridge, in March, 1810. In this connection she continued till after her marriage with Rev. Mr. Ely, when she removed her relation to the church in Monson. Since her residence in this place, though she has been much afflicted with sickness, few will question her usefulness, either in her family or in society. To her children, it is not too much to say, that she has been an affectionate and tender mother, and to her husband a devoted companion. Her state of health has for some time

past forbid her taking an active part in the public concerns of society, but her feelings have ever been united with those who have been laboring to do good. To the great benevolent objects of the day, she was much devoted. Her heart was gladdened, when she heard what was doing for Zion, and she cheerfully contributed her influence as well as property, to promote the general concern. Her general deportment as a christian, was such as to carry convincing evidence that she was a child of God. If, in her religious experiences, you have not seen the blaze of the meteor, you have seen that which is equally as convincing, the steadily increasing light, "which shines more and more unto the perfect day." During the long protracted sickness, which closed her earthly existence, she endured her trial with exemplary patience; and during the latter part more especially, she appeared to feel what is expressed in our text; that while "it is Christ to live, it is gain to die." A deep sense of her own unworthiness, and of the evil of sin, as committed against a holy and merciful God, have been the prevailing impressions of her mind. Having for a considerable time entertained little expectation of a recovery, she has spent her time, apparently, in endeavouring to be prepared for that change through which she has been called to pass. Her conversation and general deportment have for some time plainly indicated an impression that she must bid adieu to the world. She spake much of her sins—her ingratitude—her short-comings in duty; and has earnestly sought forgiveness for the past, and assistance that she might be more devoted to God through the remaining moments of life. Her anxious desire has appeared to be, entirely to renounce the world, and to devote her time exclusively to the preparation necessary to meet her Judge.

To her surviving friends and acquaintance, it must be not a little gratifying that to the last moment she enjoyed the full exercise of her reason; and that, as she approached nearer to the final hour, her hope became more comforting, and that she experienced the gracious and animating presence of her

Saviour in the last conflict, and left the world with such entire willingness to "go hence and be with Christ."

With the mourning friends, the occasion demands the expression of our sympathy.

My beloved Brother—The cup from which you have been called to drink is full of sorrow. You will not doubt that I feel deeply interested in your case, and that you share largely in my sympathy in your trials. The event which places you a mourner before us at the present time, summons me to the recollection of scenes that are full of sorrow.* I know your pain, I can tell all your grief. Full well I can estimate your sad and disconsolate situation. Sad and lonely will be your hours ; often will nature break over the restraints which grace may impose, and vent itself in sighs and tears. Gladly, dear Brother, would I minister to you the consolation your situation demands ; gladly would I remove your grief were it in my power ; but it is the Lord who has wounded, and he only can heal. But let it not be thought amiss if I remind you that you are a man—professedly a christian—a Minister of the gospel. And may we not say to you, 'Remember the counsel you have so often been called to minister to others under similar trials, and look for consolation in that religion you have professed to embrace. The loss you have sustained, we know is great, but unspeakably greater, we trust, has been the gain to your friend. And will not the thought that she is released from pain, and, as we trust, enjoying unalloyed felicity, afford some mitigation to your grief in your disconsolate hours ? But you are a Minister, set for a guide and example to others. To you will the eyes of your people be turned to see an example of that patient submission you have so often urged upon them. And for your encouragement, remember the precious promises of Him, who worketh all things agreeable to the counsel of his own will.'

The children, and other surviving friends of the deceased,

* The author was called to bury an amiable and beloved wife about two years and a half ago.

will accept the expression of our sympathy on this mournful occasion. May that divine Being, who directs all things in wisdom, verify to you that precious promise made to his friends, that all things shall work together for their good.

The members of the Church in this place will consider this event as the voice of God addressed to them. The direction is, "Arise and trim your lamps, for behold the bridegroom cometh." One after another of your number is taken, while few are coming forward to fill their place. Ought you not then to consider this event as a solemn call to you to be up and doing, lest when the bridegroom cometh you be found slumbering and unprepared !

My brethren and friends of the assembly usually worshiping in this place—I present to you on this solemn occasion your beloved Pastor and Minister under a load of affliction. Often has he mingled his sympathy with you under similar trials, ministered to your consolation in affliction, and borne you in his arms to a throne of grace. He now stands before you to ask for a return of sympathy, and for an interest in your prayers. His trials have been many and severe. You have before this accompanied him to the grave, following the remains of a companion and of children. He now bleeds again, and again he raises his voice to you in the affecting language of distress, "Have pity upon me; O ye, my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me." And give me leave to say, that his future usefulness among you as a Minister, depends much upon your kindness and faithfulness to him under his trials. You expect that he will be to you an example of patient submission. But you will remember he is a man, subject to the same infirmities with yourselves. Permit me then to commend him to you, as one whose case demands your commiseration. Nor think it amiss that I remind you of the peculiarly trying situation in which your Minister is placed. He has a family of young and tender children entwining around him, demanding his constant atten-

tion. He has come to a period in life when nature begins to shrink from a heavy burden ; and when, peculiarly, domestic friends are needed to minister to comfort. Under these circumstances, you will not, I trust, forget your obligation to him. Particularly let me urge you to remember him at a throne of grace. It is divine grace only that can support him, and it is only by divine grace that he can rise above, and profit by these trials. As you value him, as you sympathise with him, as you wish him hereafter to be useful among you, pray for him. Remember also that the event so afflictive to your Minister is a loud warning to you. The language of Providence is, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

Brethren in the Ministry—This day adds another witness to the many already furnished, that man is mortal, and that Ministers are not exempt from the trials of life. While we mingle a tear of sympathy with our afflicted brother, let us not forget how uncertain are all our enjoyments. Our friends are constantly bidding us adieu. Immortal beings, whose spiritual welfare has been entrusted to us, are constantly passing on to the judgment seat to bear witness to our fidelity, or neglect of duty. We, like others, are in a state of trial, and like others we must expect a share of afflictions. Some of us have been called already to drink of the bitter cup, and all have been reminded that we are not to place our affections too strongly upon worldly enjoyments. Let it then be our earnest prayer, that this admonition we have now received, may produce a salutary effect upon us, exciting us to greater watchfulness and vigor in the discharge of duty.

The people of this assembly will, I trust, consider the event which has occurred, as the voice of God to the living. The time of our life is short. We know not what a day may bring forth. Our years hasten as a tale that is told. Death will soon overtake us, and our account will be sealed up to the great day. Our condition will then be unalterably fixed.

Let all then be persuaded to attend to the admonition which this day presents ; that when we shall stand on the verge of the grave, looking back, we may say, " It has been Christ for us to live, and it is gain to die."

